

Notions of *perspective* and *perspectivising* in intercultural communication research

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The appeal of the notion of *perspective*

The notion of *perspective* has aroused the interest of an increasing number of researchers within linguistics. If we take a good look at the linguistic phenomena that are analysed with reference to *perspective*, it is possible to discern at least five different phenomena (Lindeman 1993: 7). These are:

- spatial orientation (deixis) (Ballweg 1997; Fillmore 1982; Hoffmann 1997; Zifonun 1997)
- judging (Bredel & Dittmar 1997; Keim 1996; Rehbein 1984; Sandig 1996; Vonderwülbecke 1997; Bredel 2002)
- subjectivity and its specific knowledge structure (Cornelis 1995; Edelstein & Keller 1982; Köller 1993; Langacker 1995; Lindemann 1993; Zifonun 2002, 2003; Graumann & Karlmeier 2002)
- intonation (Canisius 1993), and
- the propositional attitude or the relation between the matrix sentence and the subordinated clause (Brünner 1991; Hartung 1996; Dittmar & Bredel 1998; Sanders 1994; Sanders & Redeker 1993; Rehbein 2003)

What could be the reason as to why so many different phenomena are analysed under the same heading? I can formulate three possible reasons for the appeal of *perspective*.

First of all, the original meaning of *perspective*, as the organising principle of the representation of a three-dimensional space on a plane surface, still stimulates the academic imagination. Every day, we are faced with the temptations of all kinds of virtual realities on television, games and the Internet. However, the aspects that you observe in these constantly changing environments are still

determined by one vanishing point. This brilliant discovery from the sixteenth century is easily understood as a metaphor and, as a consequence, *perspectivity* is transposed as an organising principle to other cognitive domains and mental activities.

However, the appeal of *perspective* may also have another reason. To shift *perspective* from the author to the character to the reader, from the speaker to the hearer to the audience and vice versa is fundamental to any interpretation process. As soon as the reconstruction of meaning goes beyond introspection, the shifting of perspectives comes into sight. Could it be that this methodical principle has simply been elevated to a theory? That a technical notion has become a theoretical one?

Finally, the notion of *perspective* has a particular attraction for linguists today. It is apparent that the notion of *perspective* covers a range of phenomena that have been on the periphery of structural linguistics for a long time. A common feature of elements of these phenomena is that they go beyond the boundaries of the clause – that clause in its ‘splendid’ isolation. Other disciplines like Psychology or Sociology have taken the lead in the analysis of these *perspective* phenomena and linguists are trying to integrate their findings. Could *perspective* be one of the notions that signal compensation for the object reduction of linguistics (Ehlich 1996)?

In this book we ask the question as to whether analyses of intercultural communication have determined and enriched linguistic methodology and theory. In this chapter, I will try to answer this question with respect to the use of the notion of *perspective*. It is clear that *perspective* and *perspectivity* were not invented within the field of intercultural communication, as I will illustrate in the next section. Subsequently in Section 3, the application of the notion of *perspective* within various studies of intercultural discourse will be discussed. Section 4 contains an example of an analysis of intercultural discourse beyond misunderstanding that illustrates my conception of perspectivising intercultural discourse. In Section 5, conclusions are drawn with respect to the effect of intercultural studies on linguistics.

A short historical survey

König (1989) provides us with a very informative historical survey of the notion of *perspective*. This notion was already used in the Middle Ages to denote a special branch of applied science, namely the optics. The term is derived from the Latin verb *perspicere*, which means ‘to observe accurately’. As Köller (1993)

points out, *perspective* was understood as the ‘doctrine of accurately observing’ until the Renaissance. The discovery at that time of the technique of the vanishing point to create depth in painting set a new standard for representing reality. Only ‘paintings in perspective’ could reach the standard of a realistic representation.

Leibniz (1646–1716) was the scholar who introduced the notion of *perspective* in Philosophy. He formulated the idea that every representation depends on the point of view of its observer:

Il est vray que la même chose peut etre représentée differemment; mais il doit toujours y avoir un rapport exact entre la representation et la chose, et par consequent entre les diferentes representations d’une même chose.

(Leibniz, cit. in König 1989)

It is true that the same object can be represented in different ways, but there should always be a clear connection between the representation and the object, and consequently between the different representations of the same object.

(my translation)

From Philosophy, the notion found its way into other disciplines within the Humanities. In History, the notion became important with respect to epistemological discussions on the value of historical knowledge. In Sociology, *perspective* was adopted by Herbert Mead ([1927] 1983) in his well-known theory on sociality that we will discuss later more extensively. In Psychology, Graumann (1960) formulated his phenomenological theory on observation and in Literary Studies, the notion of *perspective* has stimulated the novel theory that differentiates between the author’s and the character’s *perspective* (Bakhtin 1973). Finally, mention should be made of Panovky’s (1992) report on the debate within the History of Art referring to the question as to whether the use of the central perspective should be regarded as the visual truth or solely as a convention.

It is striking that König (1989) does not pay any attention to the linguistic developments of *perspective* in his survey. We can conclude that the use of the notion within linguistics is relatively recent. For instance, Köller (1993) states that the notion of *perspective* is not used in discussions on language and culture (e.g. Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis). The first real terminological use of *perspective* may be the theory on ‘functional sentence perspective’ (Mathesius 1929). It would appear that recent linguistic use of *perspective* has mainly been influenced by the developments in Sociology, Psychology and Literary Studies that form the basis of this survey.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to reconstruct the complete development of the notion of *perspective* within Linguistics, but we cannot ignore the way Ferdinand De Saussure used the notion. In order to distinguish between his synchronic and diachronic approach to language, he states:

La synchrony ne connaît qu'une perspective, celle des sujets parlants, et toute sa méthode consiste à recueillir leur témoignage; pour savoir dans quelle mesure une chose est une réalité, il faudra et il suffira de rechercher dans quelle mesure elle existe pour la conscience des sujets. La linguistique diachronique, au contraire, doit distinguer deux perspectives, l'une *prospective*, qui suit le cours du temps l'autre *rétrospective*, qui le remonte.

(De Saussure [1916] 1972: 128)

Synchrony only has one perspective, that of the speaking subjects, and its entire method consists of gathering their accounts; in order to find out to what extent an object is real, it is sufficient to investigate to what extent it exists in the consciousness of the subjects. Diachronic linguistics, on the other hand, distinguishes between two perspectives, one being long-term following the path of time, and the one retrospective, going back in time. (my translation)

This fragment shows that the notion of *perspective* is a technical one and was already part of everyday scientific language at the beginning of the last century.

With respect to the study of language and discourse in recent decades, Graumann and Kallmeyer (2002:2) observe the development of two concepts of *perspectivity* side by side. On the one hand, they observe the tradition of Leibniz, Nietzsche and Husserl that resulted in an epistemological concept of *perspectivity* as a general characteristic of human consciousness and knowledge, and on the other hand they observe the tradition of Herbert Mead and Alfred Schultz that resulted in a social-interactional concept. The latter states that *perspective setting and taking* and, consequently, the mutuality of *perspectivity* is a prerequisite of human communication (ibid.).

As an example of a very specific linguistic application within the epistemological concept of *perspective*, we should mention Functional Grammar. In Functional Grammar the notion of *perspective* is reserved for the active-passive distinction alone. The perspective depends on the subject-object assignment. The first perspective is claimed to depict the perspective of the subject. The second perspective depends on the object (Siewierska 1993). Another application within this tradition more related to text linguistics can be found in studies on text perspective. For instance, Sanders and Redeker (1993:69) define textual perspective as “the introduction of a subjective viewpoint that restricts the validity of the presented information to a particular person in discourse.” Finally,

the psychologist Graumann should be mentioned as representative of this tradition, as his concept of *perspectivity* has also inspired many discourse analyses on perspectivity. Keim (2002: 144–145) provides us with a clear summary of his concept in which original mathematical notions are related to the notions of the conversational rhetoric approach. She clarifies the correspondence between mathematics and conversation analysis as follows:

According to Graumann (1993) “perspectivity” is a cognitive concept that denotes the interrelationship and mutual definition of the elements “viewpoint” (= the position of the observer), “aspect” (= what can be seen of an object from a given viewpoint), and “horizon” (= whole context of reference for the experience for that object). The perception of certain aspects of an object (in relation to one’s position) is always combined with the anticipation of further aspects of this object in relation to its horizon. Perspectivity has a dynamic quality that is characterized by a permanent transition from experience to the potentiality of further experience. Setting or adopting a perspective means structuring and framing the perceived object in relation to a given viewpoint. Therefore, the perception and categorization of objects as much as the solutions of problems differ in relation to the perceiver’s or actor’s point of view.

(Keim 2002: 144–145)

This summary clearly illustrates the epistemological concept of perspectivity. Section 3.3 will review the conversational rhetoric studies on perspectivity in intercultural discourse.

The social-interactional conception of *perspective* goes back to sociology and is determined via Goffmann and Garfinkel by Herbert Mead’s philosophy of sociality. It was Herbert Mead who transposed the notion of *perspective* as a means for spacial orientation to the domain of social orientation. Each individual has the opportunity to develop a relationship with others by shifting to their perspectives. He even states:

Die Grenzen sozialer Organisation sind in der Unfähigkeit von Individuum zu suchen, die Perspektive von anderen zu übernehmen, sich an ihre Stelle zu versetzen. ([1927] 1983:215)

The boundaries of social organisation are to be found in the inability of individuals to adopt the perspective of others, to empathize with their situation.

(my translation)

Mead notes that the individual has two possible perspectives towards himself, which he calls ‘I’ and ‘me’, where the latter represents the ‘generalised others’. The opportunity and the ability to anticipate different perspectives are summarised in this notion of ‘the generalised others’. Attitudes, which the

individual presupposes others have, are deeply rooted in his experience; the reaction, however, to the attitudes may also have new unexpected elements.

The discussion of subsequent analyses of perspective in intercultural discourse will illustrate that the two concepts of *perspectivity* are not as distinctive as Graumann and Kallmeyer (2002) claim. In actual fact, studies on intercultural discourse integrate the epistemological and the social-interactional concepts of perspective in order to comprehend the interculturality of intercultural discourse.

Studies on perspective in intercultural discourse

Research in the field of intercultural communication has developed into interdisciplinary cooperation. Motivated by the social needs in a globalising world with hybrid identities and constantly changing ethnic boundaries, the field has been a meeting place for theories and methods from various disciplines. This means that different concepts of *perspectivity* can be traced back to one another. In the following sections we discuss various concepts.

Shift of perspective as an empathy strategy

In the 1970s, we find early references to the notion of *perspective* in the work of the American communication researcher Milton Bennett on intercultural communication (Bennett 1979). He states that, in contrast to the assumption that people are basically similar, we should assume that each human being is essentially unique and, therefore, differences between people occur. The so-called 'Golden Rule' from the Bible, 'Do unto others as you would have done unto you', can be traced back to this misplaced assumption of similarity. As a consequence many misunderstandings occur in intercultural communication (Bennett 1979:418). He therefore proposes that intercultural misunderstandings could be solved with the help of an *empathy strategy*. In his definition of empathy he refers to the notion of *perspective*, or in actual fact to the notion of *shifting of perspective*. He states that empathy concerns "a shift of perspective away from our own to an acknowledgment of the other person's different experience. This shift in perspective is often accompanied by a willingness to participate in the other person's experience, at least to the extent of behaving in ways appropriate to that experience" (Bennett 1979:419).

According to Bennett the empathy strategy consists of seven steps based upon Goffmann's Self Concept. The steps that develop empathy skills are: As-

suming Difference, Knowing Self, Suspending Self, Allowing Guided Imagination, Allowing Emphatic Experience, Re-establishing Self, and Implementing Empathy. In conclusion he notes: “With empathy, we might indeed be able to overcome the Golden Rule putting in its place the “Platinum Rule”: ‘Do unto others as they themselves would have done unto them’” (ibid.:422).

This empathy strategy has been widely professionalised in the field of (multicultural and intercultural) counselling. For instance, Ridley and Lingle (1996) developed the notion of *cultural empathy* in order to deal with complaints about intercultural misunderstanding and increasing racism in various settings. They define cultural empathy as “the learned ability of counsellors to accurately gain an understanding of the self-experience of clients from other cultures – an understanding informed by counsellors’ interpretation of cultural data” (Ridley & Ingle 1996:32).

The notion of *perspective* becomes one of the central cognitive activities in these counselling processes. In fact, *taking perspective* is the cognitive process at the heart of *cultural empathic responsiveness*, which Ridley and Ingle describe as follows:

Counsellors should attempt to understand clients from an external frame of reference. Using a perceptual schema as previously described, counsellors can move beyond naïveté to a more informed understanding of clients. This shift in perspective is a way of understanding clients from “the outside in,” and it stands in contrast to the adage that empathy equals ‘walking in another’s shoes.’
(Ridley & Lingle 1996:37)

Note that this description disputes Bennett’s aforementioned concept of empathy (1979), since ‘walking in another’s shoes’ corresponds to Bennett’s Platinum Rule ‘Do unto others as they themselves would have done unto them’. According to Ridley and Lingle, the counsellor has to develop an external frame of reference for the interpretation of clients’ experiences from other cultures. In fact, they elaborated Mead’s concept of ‘the generalised others’ into a specific interpretation method. Consequently, the notion of *taking perspective* becomes three-fold since it presupposes three frames of reference: first of all, the perceptual schema of the client itself; subsequently, the counsellor’s own cultural frames; and, thirdly, the external frame of reference about the client’s culture that the counsellor gains on the basis of his interpretation of cultural data. However, what both empathy strategies have in common is their focus on the cognitive processes of *taking perspective* without considering the discourse structures that are also involved. In this respect, these approaches are examples of the epistemological tradition of *perspectivity*.

The most recent development in the professional field of intercultural counselling concerns *intercultural mediation*. This approach interests us here because of its special emphasis on the communicative structure of counselling. Mediation concerns a conflict solving procedure, in which a third person “without power of decision” supports two parties towards a common settlement (Altman et al. 1999). This constellation with a third person “opens up a *perspective* for the conflict partners to refocus their orientation” (Haumersen & Liebe 1998:154, my translation and stress). Instead of arguing with each other, the participants aim to convince this third person that they are right and the other is wrong. The main task of the mediator, therefore, consists of the organisation and control of *decent* communication between the conflict partners. However, with respect to *intercultural* mediation, Herlyn (2001) stresses the fact that different expectations with regard to the essence of decent communication essentially determine the conflict. The intercultural mediator cannot assume agreement on common communicative rules and expectations. In actual fact, new interculturally acceptable discourse structures have to be developed within the framework of the intercultural mediation. Haumersen and Liebe (1998: 156) conclude that a successful mediation process may result in an *interculture*.

In sum, within the framework of intercultural mediation, the notion of *perspective* does not primarily concern cognitive activities, but focuses on a specific discourse constellation. More discourse analyses would reveal the discursive structures of this third-person-interaction in intercultural mediation. They could thus profit from other analyses within the social-interactional concept of *perspectivity*. Discourse strategies of third-person-interaction will be discussed in Section 3.4 with respect to the language mediator. For instance, Lambertini and ten Thije (2004) analyse third-person-interaction in intercultural training by reconstructing the reflections of the participants on successful intercultural understanding.

Taking the Other’s Perspective as a motor for the analysis

In the work of John Gumperz (1992), we find an example as to how Mead’s framework of taking the other’s perspective constitutes the basis of his argumentation with respect to the analysis of intercultural communication. I take as an example his paper on ‘Contextualisation and Understanding’ (1992). It is surprising to note that the collection of all the text fragments that contain the notion of *perspective* – nine in total – resulted in a very accurate summary of his complete argument. I would like to emphasize that *perspective* is neither a

theoretical notion in Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics nor in his theory on contextualisation, but is used as a technical term.

The analysis in Gumperz (1992) concerns interethnic communication between an English instructor, Lee, and an adult student, Don, from India, who has applied for admission to a newly created language course. The student blames the instructor for not giving him the application forms, although she promised to do so. Moreover, the student states that the instructor is able to decide who can participate in the course, which the instructor denies. The Indian sticks to his statement, with a resulting escalation in the argument.

Gumperz analyses the different levels of contextualisation with which the participants exchange their views and concludes that a misunderstanding occurs. In fact, he states that the Indian is not claiming that the instructor is in a position to decide on the application; on the contrary, he realises a culturally specific Indian speech action that is a sort of a plea, by means of which he asks her to favour his application. She does not recognize this intention and reacts as if he is accusing her of being a liar. I will discuss nine excerpts.

The first excerpt contains the theoretical framework of the analysis. Note that *perspective* is used in its everyday scientific meaning. The emphasis of the notion *perspective* is added to the quoted excerpts.

- (1) The second level [where contextualisation cues enter into the inferential process, jtt] is that of local assessments of what conversational analysts call 'sequencing' and what from a pragmatics' PERSPECTIVE one might refer to as 'speech act level implicatures'. Inferences at this level yield situated interpretations (Cook-Gumperz 1977) of what I have called 'communicative intent' (Gumperz et al. 1982, 1984). (1991:232)

In the next excerpt we find the description of his analytical strategy:

- (2) In my analysis of the transcript, I will adopt the strategy of examining the same data successively from several distinct PERSPECTIVES. (ibid.:234)

In the following, he paraphrases the instructor's point of view:

- (3) Line (2L3) is followed by a brief, seemingly rhetorical pause, which introduces Lee's exposition of her own PERSPECTIVE. (ibid.:237)

In (4) he paraphrases the way the instructor perceives the student.

- (4) Beginning with line (2L6) the PERSPECTIVE shifts from what Lee had said, to the present and to what Don might want to do. (ibid.:237)

In (5) and (6) Gumperz concludes that no understanding is reached.

- (5) Although on the surface it would seem that both speakers are talking about the same general issues, they clearly approach these issues from different **PERSPECTIVES**. (ibid.:242)
- (6) In spite of several attempts, they are unable to undo what both seem to sense are, in part, misunderstandings and to negotiate a shared **PERSPECTIVE**. (ibid.:242)

In (7) he compares the results so far with the point of view of what Mead called the 'generalised other':

- (7) If we look at the content of Don's responses, they seem – on the surface at least and from a native English speaking **PERSPECTIVE** strangely inconsistent. (ibid.:242)

From the point of view of 'the generalised other' he reanalyses the excerpt which results in a more appropriate formulation of the student's intentions. The result is in (11):

- (8) He is asking her to take his, Don's, **PERSPECTIVE** and support him in making a good case for admission to the course. (ibid.:245)

Excerpt (9) contains Gumperz's conclusions

- (9) Such differences are not rare and not confined to interethnic situations. But what makes this kind of situation special is that the differences in the contextualisation conventions, the inferences made at the first and sequential levels, and the resulting misunderstandings keep each conversationalist from recognizing the other's **PERSPECTIVE** at the third level of activity. As a result, attempts at repair misfire and miscommunication is compounded rather than resolved by further talk. (1992:246)

I have not quoted Gumperz's analysis to discuss the concept of contextualisation cues, but to show how the notion of *perspective* directly determines his way of analysing intercultural communication. It shapes the framework in which the contextualisation theory is justified.

Hinnenkamp (1989) discusses the interactional sociolinguistics method in his study of intercultural communication extensively and states that *taking perspective* should be considered as a consequence of hermeneutical methodology. He notes:

'Hermeneutik' soll hier keine spezialisierten "Wissenschemata" dazu in Gang setzen, sondern versteht sich einfach als von außen, aus *Analysandenperspektive* (stress added, jtt), an einen Text angelegte Leseweise, wobei ich natürlich

ganz bestimmte vorgängige Fragen und Hypothesen im Kopf habe.

(Hinnenkamp 1989:47)

Here, hermeneutics should not create specialised 'knowledge schemas' for this, but can be considered simply as methods of reading a text from the outside, from an *analytical perspective*, whereby I have, of course, very specific questions and hypotheses in mind beforehand. (my translation)

A chord is struck between the hermeneutical *analytical perspective* and the *perspective shift* of the counsellor *moving beyond naïveté* (Ridley & Lingle 1996: 37) that we discussed in Section 3.1. Both approaches use the notion of *perspective* primarily to analyse the processes of meaning construction of the participants themselves and, subsequently, overcome this 'walking in the participants' shoes' by analysing from the perspective of a generalized other. In fact, one could raise the question as to whether the analysis of intercultural discourse should presuppose at least 'two generalized others' depending on the number of cultures involved in the intercultural discourse.

Perspectivation as a rhetoric device

Gumperz's studies from the 1980s have inspired many other studies (Bilmes 1992; Bremer et al. 1996; Günthner 1993; Kotthoff 1994). At first, Gumperz's studies focused particularly on intercultural interactions in gate keeping situations in which the ethnic distinctions corresponded to the institutional dichotomy. In most cases the functionary originated from the ethnic majority group and the clients from ethnic minority groups.

The system change in Eastern Europe and the unification process in Europe have created many intercultural situations in which the institutional dichotomy no longer corresponds to clear-cut ethnic and cultural distinctions. Intercultural situations are becoming more and more complex and multiple identities have to be expressed in various institutional interactions. Participants therefore need strong rhetorical skills in order to achieve their goals in intercultural discourse. Conversational Rhetoric is a discourse analytical approach that has elaborated on the notions of *perspectivity* in a more theoretical sense in order to analyse this complexity.

Conversational Rhetoric is a discourse analytical approach that is closely related to interactional sociolinguistics. The analyses focus on specific European intercultural situations, for instance on German-German interactions in various – not only gate keeping – settings, like radio interviews, biographical interviews and talk shows (see Keim 1996, 2002; Shethar & Hartung 1998;

Pache 1998; Graumann & Kallmeyer 2002; Liebscher this volume). In these analyses, the notion of *perspective* is applied as an analytical tool, much like John Gumperz uses it. However, the notion is also elaborated into a theoretical notion in order to explain the complexity of coincidence of institutional and intercultural structures. This can be illustrated by the many compositions in which the notion of *perspective* is proposed, like *Perspektivenabschottung* (hedging of perspectives) (Keim 1996), *kontrastive Perspektivenwechsel* (contrastive shifts of perspective) (Shethar & Hartung 1998), or *framerelevante Perspektivenübernahme* (frame relevant perspective takeover) Adelswärd's (1988).

Moreover, the notion of *perspective* is defined not only as a cognitive but also as a pragmatic concept. This elaboration is documented by Keim's (1996) definition, as follows:

Von Perspektivik als übergeordnetem Begriff unterscheiden wir Perspektive als die Realisierung einer konkreten, an eine bestimmte soziale Zuständigkeit eines Akteurs gebundene Sichtweise auf einen Sachverhalt. Eine Perspektive bezieht sich auf eine nicht lokal an eine Äußerungseinheit gebundene Eigenschaft des sprachlichen Handelns; in diesem Sinne ist sie eine Einzelaktivität überspannende Handlungsorientierung und Handlungsstrukturierung.

(Keim 1996: 194)

To distinguish from perspective as a generic term, we define perspective as the realisation of a concrete view of facts linked to a specific social competence of an actor. A perspective relates to a characteristic of speech acts that is not linked locally to an individual comment; in this sense it is a single activity of the overall orientation and structure of action. (my translation)

In a more recent paper Keim (2002) adds: "In most cases, a specific perspective is not directly visible or explicitly expressed in a single utterance, but has to be reconstructed. The relation between an overarching perspective and a locally produced verbal activity is established by contextualisation" (Keim 2002: 145).

It is apparent that the notion of *perspective* is being used to depict not only a cognitive schema, but also concrete interactive structures.

For instance, Keim and Schmidt (1995) analyse an interaction in an Austrian village on the Slovakian border in which, among others, two Slovakian linguists talk to the local mayor, who has Slovakian family roots. In the analysis, Keim and Schmidt focus on the mayor's unprompted and detailed biographical account of his ethnic and national identity at the very beginning of the meeting. They state that this perspective secures the mayor's right to speak for a long time. In fact, the notion of *perspective* is used as an explanation for the outcome of their sequential analysis of turn taking.

Shethar and Hartung (1998) analyse interactions between East and West Germans and focus on the radio discourse about so-called *Ostjammer* ('Eastern misery'). Interestingly, they introduce the notions of *position* and *positioning* alongside the notions of *perspective* and *perspectivation*. Whereas the former terms express the speaker's membership of a cultural group, the latter indicate thematic relevancies and specific judgements in the verbalization of states of affairs. With the help of compound notions like *personal perspective*, *critical perspective*, *contrastive perspective*, *shift of perspectives*, and *overall German perspective*, they reconstruct the rhetoric devices of former East German argumentation. They conclude that although the latter make use of these sophisticated rhetorical structures, they are excluded from hegemonic media discourse (Shethar & Hartung 1998: 55).

Finally, I refer to Pache's analysis of German-German discourse during an interview as an example of intercultural analysis beyond misunderstanding (Pache 1998). Pache uses the notion of *perspective* from conversational rhetoric. In fact, she states that *perspectivation* in discourse is determined by the contextualisation of ethnic-cultural membership (*ibid.*: 201). Her analysis concerns an interview of an Eastern German female applicant by a Western German female committee. She focuses on the applicant's rhetoric strategies in reaction to the following question: "Wir sind alles deutsche weisse Frauen, wie wärn das für dich als einzige Migrantin denn in so einem Team" (We all are German white women; how would you cope as the only migrant in such a team?). I will not discuss the details of her analysis as to how the applicant copes with this very complex intercultural situation. Pache reconstructs the way she crosses fixed ethnic-cultural identities and, thereby creates the possibility of reciprocal perspectives (Pache 1998: 215). She concludes with the statement:

Der hier analysierte Vorfall ist ein Beispiel dafür, wie der bipolare Gebrauch symbolisch aufgeladener Kategorien notwendige Reziprozität gefährden kann. Es ist aber auch ein Beispiel dafür, dass lähmende Effekte aufgelöst werden können, wenn fixierte Perspektivendivergenzen durch flexible Perspektivierungen ersetzt werden. (Pache 1998: 216)

The incident analysed here exemplifies how the bipolar use of symbolically laden categories can endanger necessary reciprocity. However, it also illustrates how this paralysing effect can be neutralised if fixed differences in perspectives are replaced by flexible *perspectivations*. (my translation)

In actual fact, Pache illustrates how the use of the notions of *perspective* and *perspectivation* facilitate an analysis of intercultural communication beyond

misunderstanding. She considers the notion of *perspectivation* as a rhetorical device to overcome intercultural misunderstanding.

Resuming these conversational rhetoric analyses it is apparent that the notions of *perspective* and *perspectivation* help to overcome the restrictions of a strictly sequential analysis that is traditionally carried out in conversational analysis (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974). Conversational Rhetoric, however, does not restrict itself to the communicative surface, but considers the mental activities of participants as well as the verbal ones. As a matter of fact, the notion of *perspectivation* refers to cognitive as well as interactive structures; it concerns the overall action potential of the participants during a sequence of discourse that is related to their social position and cultural group membership. It would be interesting to reanalyse the stretches of discourse from a functional pragmatic theoretical framework and reflect upon the question as to which notions would be used to denote the interrelationship between the social, mental and interactive determinations. One could detect, for instance, a correspondence between the function of *perspectivation* and of the *cultural apparatus* (Rehbein this volume; Hartog this volume).

Perspectivation as a strategy for the language mediator

In the following example, we find the notion of *perspective* or *perspectivation* in a far more restricted meaning. Actually, we see how the *taking of perspective* is expressed in intercultural communication itself and is used to denote specific discourse strategies. The example originates from the work of Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (1985) on the differences between the position of the *interpreter* and that of the *language mediator*. The authors note that the language mediator not only has the task of translating but also of interfering in the ongoing interaction if necessary, to explain possible cultural or linguistic differences. Therefore, the language mediator (M) has to *perspectivate* his talk in order to make clear who should be understood to be the original speaker. Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff define *perspectivation* as follows:

Unter Perspektivierung verstehen wir solche Verfahren, mit denen M für den angesprochenen S anzeigt, ob M zu einem gegebenen Zeitpunkt *als M selbst* spricht oder *im Auftrag* des jeweils anderen S; m.a.W.: solcher Verfahren, mit denen M ausdrückt, wer der Urheber einer Mitteilungsentention ist.

(Knapp & Knapp-Potthoff 1985: 455)

By *perspectivation* we refer to those strategies, by means of which M indicates to the addressee S, whether, at a specific point in time, M speaks on his own

behalf or on the behalf of someone else; in other words, those strategies by means of which M indicates who is to be considered as the instigator of the communicative act. (my translation)

Knapp and Knapp-Potthoff (1985) have elaborated three perspectivation strategies. These are:

1. the transformation of the personal deixis in order to guarantee referential identity;
2. the use of ‘mediator-performative-formels’, to indicate the original speaker of the speech action, e.g. the use of reported speech;
3. the verbal characterisation of emphatic intonation.

Obviously, the language mediator has an important task in achieving understanding in intercultural communication and *perspectivation* strategies will help him to fulfil his task. However, these strategies are not limited to his position, as we have seen in the previous sections. Other participants may make use of perspectivation strategies in order to improve their intercultural understanding as well.

Perspective as a heuristic axis to analyse intersubjectivity

Shea (1994) proposes a model to analyse intercultural communication that challenges Gumperz’s notion of mismatching contextualisation. He demonstrates that NS-NNS conversation is not simply characterized by cultural differences and communicative styles, and claims that “differences are taken up and acted upon within the social character of the activity” (ibid.: 383). In his model he takes *perspective* and *production* as the two constituting axes. He defines these axes as follows:

On the axis of perspective, interactants position themselves referentially, defining the relative distance between their focus of attention and whether it acknowledges the other’s perspective of the world, or indexes distinct orientations and different commitments. On the axis of production, speakers reciprocally position themselves with reference to the interactional authority and control over the talk, defined in terms of such indices as access to the floor, patterns of assertion and solicitation, and the quality of uptake and extending engagement with the other speaker’s talk. (Shea 1994: 375)

The work of Shea shows us the notion of *perspective* in a complete different light, used as a substitute for the referential function of language. Each utterance indicates to what extent participants share the same commitment to the

world. In my opinion, Shea's analysis shows how a metaphor can substitute real analysis. In actual fact, too many different discursive features are taken together, so that in the end no new insight into discourse is revealed.

Perspectivising as a communicative apparatus

Koole and ten Thije (1994) analysed the speech action pattern of reporting in intercultural communication and detected different versions of this pattern depending on the chosen perspective. The notion of *perspective* is defined as "the indication of the linguistic means that make the hearers interpret the report from a certain point of view" (Koole & ten Thije 1994: 105). Apart from deictic procedures there are also appellative procedures necessary to shape a perspective such as co-referential nouns, verbs, and adjectives.

Koole and ten Thije distinguish between the reporter's report that originates (see for this notion: Bühler 1934) in the actual speech situation and the messenger's report that has its origo in an imagination space (Ehlich 1979). The third option is called *switching of perspective* and may be characterized mainly as a report that does not have a fixed origo. In this option, the origo switches between the reporting situation, the actual speech situation and the reported situation (see also Brünner 1981; Tannen 1989; ten Thije to appear with respect to the discourse function of different forms of reported speech).

The different options for reporting are not intercultural discourse structures, although they can be functionalised for intercultural purposes. Koole and ten Thije (1994) conclude from their analyses that the different *perspectives* provide team members with a discursive means to express their identification with different cultural groups. In this way, the use of *perspectives* is a linguistic means that may contribute to the neutralization of the oppositions with which participants in intercultural communication are confronted. In actual fact, their analysis exemplifies a study of intercultural discourse beyond misunderstanding.

Ten Thije (2003) elaborates on the analysis of *perspective* in a study on biographical narratives, in which people from former East and West Germany tell biographical anecdotes about the famous East German car, 'der Trabi'. From a corpus of biographical interviews, I collected the names and nicknames storytellers use to refer to this peculiar car. Interestingly, these names often presuppose much culturally specific knowledge, like for instance *Asphaltblase* (Asphalt-Bubble) or *Pappe* (Pasteboard). Depending on the intercultural constellation of the interview, storytellers indicate whether an East German speaker presupposes less common cultural knowledge on the part of the West

German hearer. When the speaker presupposes that the hearer lacks important knowledge to interpret the story properly, the speaker changes his speaker plan and inserts extra explanations or introduces reformulations. In actual fact, ten Thije (2003) lists various discourse structures, such as attributive apposition, repair, reformulation, quotation introducers, reported speech, prosodic structure and speech accompanying laughter that have the same function. These discourse structures have in common that they are the result of changes in the speaker's plan. Furthermore, these discourse structures do not primarily concern the propositional content, but indicate the personal attitude of the speaker towards the verbalized state of affairs. In functional pragmatics speaker and hearer are both be denoted as interactants.

Within the functional pragmatic approach to discourse the notion of communicative apparatus has been proposed to refer to linguistic structures that differ from either speech actions or linguistic procedures (Rehbein 2002). Apparatus concern fixed configurations that realise purposes and may have a different discourse extension (Diskurserstreckung, Rehbein 2001). Communicative apparatus may change the realisation of linguistic procedures. They may also change the pass through an action pattern, or change the discourse structure itself by initiating a new speech action pattern. Communicative apparatus work locally; they function in an ad hoc manner, like for instance, turn taking apparatus and repair apparatus (Rehbein 2001).

On the basis of analyses of biographical interviews, ten Thije (2003) proposes the *communicative apparatus of perspectivising*. This apparatus is the prerequisite for the verbalization of propositional content of an utterance. My definition of *perspectivising* elaborates the definition of Koole and ten Thije (1994: 105) in which *perspective* is determined as the "indication of the linguistic means that *make* the hearers interpret the report from a certain point of view" (stress added). The communicative apparatus modifies the knowledge that is verbalized in the propositional content in two different directions. It modifies the relationship between the knowledge of the speaker and reality or it modifies the relationship between the speaker's knowledge and the propositional content. By referring to the functional pragmatic knowledge model (Ehlich & Rehbein 1986), it is possible to clarify the relation between reality (P), knowledge of the interactants (π) and the propositional content (p) with the acronym 'P- π -p', in which 'P' indicates the social reality, ' π ' the knowledge of the interactants, and 'p' the propositional content. The communicative apparatus of *perspectivising* operates on the relationship between 'P- π ', for instance, by taking into account the social position or the membership of the interactants. Furthermore, the apparatus operates upon the relationship be-

tween 'π-p', for instance, by taking into account missing cultural knowledge of the hearer.

The communicative apparatus of perspectivising is part of the execution of the speaker's control plan. The apparatus works as a result of the speaker monitoring the hearer's reactions in discourse. In particular, perspectivising concerns the conditions for verbalizing the propositional content in a sequence of utterances. Whenever a speaker spots (re)actions from the hearer that show that his verbalizations of knowledge about social reality are not being understood, because the hearer does not take up the expected hearer side of speech actions, the speaker can adapt his speaker plan. In Section 4 I will discuss the communicative apparatus of perspectivising in more detail.

The contribution of the different notions of perspectivity to intercultural understanding

As a starting point for a comparison of the different notions of *perspectivity*, Rehbein's definition of intercultural understanding from twenty years ago (Rehbein 1985) is quoted. On the basis of Rehbein's description, subsequent studies can be classified according to their contribution to the insight into the process of intercultural misunderstanding and even beyond misunderstanding. Rehbein states:

Interkulturelle Verständigung ist an das Verstehen des sprachlichen Handelns des anderen gebunden. Dieses setzt an am sprachlichen und nonverbalen Ausdruck als der *Inskription* des zugrundeliegenden sprachlichen Musters und dessen Handlungsdimensionen. Daraus entsteht das Problem interkultureller Verständigung, denn die Inskription lässt sich nur verstehen, wenn ein gemeinsames Wissen zugrundeliegt; andernfalls wird das (normalerweise automatisch ablaufende) Verstehen zu einem kommunikativen Entziffern bzw. zu einem Projizieren eigenen Wissens in den anderen, zu einem tastenden Etablieren ein *gemeinsames* Wissens im Diskurs.

(Rehbein 1985: 10; stress as in the original text)

Intercultural understanding (Verständigung) is linked to the mutual understanding of the other's speech actions. This estimates the verbal and non-verbal expression to be the *inscription* of the underlying speech action patterns and its dimensions for action. This results in the problem of intercultural understanding, since the inscription can only be understood when there is a basis of common knowledge; otherwise the process (which normally develops automatically) becomes a communicative deciphering process (Entziffern) or leads to the projection (Projektion) of one's own knowledge onto the other, lead-

ing to a feeling for the establishment (Etablieren) of common knowledge in discourse. (my translation)

The central notion in this definition concerns inscription. Rehbein (1979:351) derives the notion of inscription from Kasher (1971). The latter relates this notion to the type-token relation, but acknowledges these two notions within Peirce's tradition as a three-position relation: type refers to the necessary sign, token to the actual sign and tone to the possible sign (mode of being). Inscription represents the third position, namely the possible mode of being.

Consequently Rehbein's definition of understanding can be represented as the connection between a verbal or non-verbal expression with an underlying action that is labelled (inscribed) in its possible position within an overall pattern. On the basis of common knowledge interactants automatically know *which* expression inscribes *which* action in *which* overall pattern. Rehbein (1977:88) notes that inscriptions are indicated by specific linguistic means, but does not mention them directly. With respect to his definition of intercultural communication this means that common knowledge is often lacking and, therefore, the linking of an *expression* to *action* cannot automatically be completed. The speakers have to *decipher* the communication sequence or *project* their expectations upon the hearer side or have to *establish* common knowledge in discourse, since inscription is basically multi-directional.

When we take this definition of intercultural understanding as a starting point, we can relate the distinctive conceptions of *perspectivity* to specific elements of intercultural understanding.

First of all, the basic idea of Herbert Mead, that communication is based on *mutuality of perspectives* and that understanding is accomplished by *taking up the other's perspective* (Section 2), can be related to the principle of the multidimensionality of inscription and its function of labelling and linking up an expression with an underlying action. Only on the basis of common knowledge can an accurate labelling understanding be accomplished. Gumperz's *taking up the hearer's perspective* (Section 3.2) can be considered as the methodical extrapolation of this basic insight.

Secondly, the notion of perspectivation as an *empathy strategy* (Section 3.1) refers to the *projection* of common knowledge in the case of a lack of common knowledge. Analyses of intercultural mediation illustrate how the process of *establishing common knowledge in discourse* can be described in more detail.

Thirdly, the notion of perspectivation as a *rhetoric device* (Section 3.3) refers, first of all, to a communicative practice in which the *inscription of expression to action* is automatically less self-evidential than Rehbein (1985)

presupposed. The rhetoric devices that conversational rhetoric have identified can be considered as detailed designations of the process of *establishment of common knowledge in discourse*.

Fourthly, the *perspectivation strategies of language mediator* (Section 3.4) illustrate a discourse in which the inscription is structurally de-automatised. Perspectivation strategies can be considered as *indicators of inscription*, since these strategies help the original speaker and hearer to complete the inscription even when common knowledge is absent.

Fifthly, the conceptualisation of perspectivation as a communication apparatus is also an elaboration of the process of *indicating the inscription*.

Finally, one could state that the conception of *perspective* as the heuristic axis to *analyse intersubjectivity* does not refer to the inscription of understanding, but to *expression* itself.

An analysis beyond misunderstanding

Introduction of the analysis

The following stretches of discourse are selected for this analysis because they are not characterized by intercultural *misunderstanding*. The interactants attain their interactive goals and intercultural understanding is accomplished. Therefore, the analysis focuses particularly on those discourse structures that facilitate this intercultural understanding. In fact, the analysis can be considered as illustrative for intercultural discourse *beyond misunderstanding*. Moreover, it illustrates the previous argument on perspectivising intercultural discourse.

As stated before, I consider perspectivising of discourse to be an outcome of a communicative apparatus (see Rehbein 2001). This apparatus modifies knowledge during the verbalizing process in ongoing discourse. These modifications take place as a consequence of the speaker monitoring the hearer's reactions in discourse. In particular, perspectivising concerns the conditions for verbalizing the propositional content in a sequence of utterances. In the stretches of discourse below we find modifications that are especially interesting with respect to verbalising knowledge in intercultural discourse. The reconstruction detects discourse structures as to how speakers anticipate cultural differences or potential intercultural ignorance and ensure intercultural understanding. Michael Clyne gives an appropriate description of successful intercultural discourse with the following maxim: "*Successful inter-cultural*

communication is achieved by making the communicative intent very clear and, where possible, being aware of the interlocutor's cultural expectations" (Clyne 1994: 195).

Ten Thije (2003) proposes that this process of taking into account the communicative expectations in intercultural discourse can be considered to be structured by three steps in the verbalizing process: *generalising*, *perspectivising* and *contrasting cultures*. As we see, *perspectivising* is connected to the other two steps in verbalization. I will give a short outline in advance of what will be illustrated in detail in the analysis below. The three steps of verbalising propositional content can be determined as follows: by *generalising*, an interactant verbalizes the propositional content as a cultural standard solution; by *perspectivising*, he locates the propositional content in the actual speech situation, taking into account cultural standards of *the other*. By *contrasting cultures*, the speaker enables the hearer to compare the speaker's cultural standards with his own and, subsequently, attain an adequate interpretation of the discourse.

These three steps of verbalizing propositional content are based on a pragmatic conceptualisation of culture (Sarangi 1995; Redder & Rehbein 1987; Koole & ten Thije 1994). According to ten Thije (2002, 2003), culture is considered to be potential standard solutions to recurrent collective standard problems. Human groups construct structures of action that enable them to deal with problems that the collective or group often experiences and can, therefore, be called cultural structures of action. Members of cultural groups share common knowledge of these standard solutions and transfer these solutions within the group and on to the next generation. In intercultural discourse, two systems of standard problems and solutions are in contact.

When people have to be aware of cultural expectations of interactants in intercultural discourse, Clyne's (1994) maxim could be rephrased as follows: participants should verbalize their own expectations as realizations of standard solutions of their own cultural group and anticipate possible differences with the standard problems and solutions of other cultural groups. Subsequently, they should enable the other to compare the different cultural standards, and, finally, attain intercultural understanding. The analysis reconstructs this interactive process in detail, and illustrates how interactants generalize, *perspectivise* and compare their cultural standards in interaction.

The constellation of the fragment

The following fragments originate from a data corpus collected in one of the many international European Tempus projects that have been developed over

the last decades. These projects have the purpose of facilitating the development of academic curricula in Eastern Europe. They are often faced with organizational and communications difficulties as a consequence of bureaucratic procedures and cultural differences. These problems often result in many personnel changes or even dissolution of the project. In the project in which the data were collected, German, Dutch and Danish academics cooperated with a Russian university in X (see also ten Thije 2002). The Dutch university had initiated the project. The officials at the German University situated in the former East Germany were also very positive about the importance of this Tempus project because it would support the university mission statement to bridge East and West Europe. However, when the project began, the German university officials could not find a native representative to participate in the project. Therefore, a Dutch lecturer who recently received a job at the German university was invited to represent his university in this international project.

The conversation that will be analysed below concerns the first encounter between the Dutchman and a local German university official about the background and purposes of the project. She tries to convince him to participate in the project. Since this project follows other cooperation projects between the German and Russian university even prior to the system change in 1989, she is involved in promoting cooperation and has a need to justify this project. In the excerpts below they discuss the problem of the reluctance of current German students to visit and study at the Russian university. Subsequently, they discuss the problem as to whether the project makes sense at all, if the purpose of student exchange cannot be achieved. The German official, however, argues that curriculum development is the main goal and, therefore, the project is still important and the Dutchman should participate.

Following ten Thije's approach to intercultural discourse (ten Thije 2002), institutional and intercultural preconditions should be considered separately in the discourse analysis of intercultural communication. In respecting the institutional constellation, one should consider that the interactants are both functionaries (e.g. agents) of the same university. The German (DF) in the excerpt is the administrative coordinator whereas the Dutchman (NT) is a lecturer. The interaction is therefore an agent-agent interaction. The discourse contains various speech action patterns that characterize the discourse type of meeting, such as interactive planning and reporting, but the patterns of explaining, clarify, illustrating and justifying form the major part. The pattern of arguing is seldom realised. The intercultural constellation is influenced by Dutch and (Eastern) German cultural standards, as well as by their distinct historical relationship with the former Soviet Union. The German official ex-

perienced the structural changes in Eastern Europe in the 1990s as a citizen of the former German Democratic Republic, whereas the Dutchman was educated and worked in Netherlands before he accepted his job at the German university. They are of more or less the same age. The fact that the Russian academic partner is situated in the former Stalingrad, is also of historical significance. However, the consequences of the Second World War only affect this international German – Russian project very indirectly.

The reconstruction will show how these institutional and intercultural structures do not determine the discourse as intercultural automatically, but shows how the interculturality of the discourse has to be revealed as an interactive accomplishment.

The sequential and action structure of the discourse fragment

Before we enter into the analysis of the perspectivising excerpts, a survey of the subsequent sections of the discourse will be presented. The twelve sections in Diagram 1 give an insight into the sequential overall structure of the discourse. The segments refer to the single utterances in the transcript that can be found at the end of this chapter. This diagram shows the action structure of the speaker – hearer interaction. A short characterization of each section reveals its position in the overall argument in this fragment. The segments (s1, s2, ...) refer to subsequent utterances of the interactants in the transcript.

‘Rich points’ to focus on in intercultural research

One of the sections in this survey in Diagram 1 attracts special attention, namely the disagreement between the German official and the Dutch colleague in Section X. The most striking utterance in this section concerns segment 38, in which DF formulates a political statement:

^{38a}Und ich sage immer wieder: [^{38b}“Da wo wir nicht sind, [^{38c}als Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{38d}ist der Amerikaner.

But I am saying over and over again: Where we are not present, as Federal Germany Republik, there is the American.

After an explanation of the academic and pedagogic importance of the international project, in s38 the German official not only contrasts the German nation state (FRG) with the United States of America, but also personalises this contrast by making use of the speaker deictic procedure ‘we’ in contrast to the symbolic procedure ‘der Amerikaner’. According to Bauer (1995) and

Diagram 1. Overview of the section and action structure of the analysed excerpt

Section	Segments	Characterization	Description of the action structure of the section
I	s1–4	Introduction of the 1st problem	DF introduces the problem of the unsatisfactory exchange programme of German students to Russia (s1–4).
II	s5–11	Reformulation of the problem and its acceptance	NT presupposes potential visa problems (s5). DF rejects this (s6a) and reformulates the problem (s6b). NT questions this (s7), and demonstrates non-understanding of the problem definition (s8, s10), DF acknowledges.
III	s8–21	1st explanation and understanding of the problem	NT asks whether students are not interested (s11). DF explains that their lack of interest comes from travel restrictions under Soviet regimes (s12a–c) and their current preference for France (s12d–f). NT demonstrates that he understands the problem (s14) and accepts the explanation (s15, 16, 17, 18, 20).
IV	s22–29	2nd explanation and confirmation	DF exemplifies her explanation by quoting the internal dialogue of an imaginary student (s22a–e), which NT accepts (s23). DF encourages NT to switch perspective to the student’s mind (s24), which NT confirms (s25). DF continues the student’s internal dialogue (s26a–e), which NT confirms (s27, 28).
V	s29–30	3rd explanation and confirmation	After a pause (s29), DF mentions political animosity as possible reason (s30), which NT confirms (s31).
VI	s32–37	4th explanation and confirmation	DF mentions the reluctance of foreign language learning of Russian by students in the GDR (s32) and mentions her own reluctant language learning experiences (s33), which she generalizes to more students (s34a–b) and quotes (s34c) their refusal to participate in the exchange (s34d–g). NT concurs (s35, 36, 37).
VII	s38–41	Consensus	After a pause (s38) DF concludes that one should not neglect these considerations (s39), which NT confirms elaborately (s41a, b).
VIII	s42–44	Introduction of 2nd problem and 1st explanation: the educational importance	NT asks whether DF is still convinced that the international project makes sense (s42a–d). DF concurs (s43a) referring to the assistance to curriculum development, which NT accepts (s44).

Diagram 1. (continued)

Section	Segments	Characterization	Description of the action structure of the section
IX	s45–49	2nd explanation: the academic importance of the project	DF states her conviction (s45a) that the curriculum content that was developed in the former West Germany (s45b–c) and is now being practiced in the former East Germany (s45d) is of good quality (s45e). NT accepts this (s46, 47). DF apologises for her lack of professional knowledge (s48a–b). Even so she repeats her strong convictions (s48c–d). NT acknowledges this (s49).
X	s50–56	Dissent about the international political importance of the cooperation	DF formulates sentential knowledge (s50a) concerning potential American hegemony over Germany in the world (s50b) that NT does not understand (s51). DF confirms her statements (s50–55). NT laughs (s52) and acknowledges with slight dissent (s56).
XI	s57–58	Reformulation concerning the national and institutional importance of the cooperation	DF reformulates her statement by referring to the interest of the German nation state (s57a), as well as the interest of each university (s57b) to transfer curriculum models (s57c) that are considered to be of high quality (s57d–g). NT acknowledges with slight dissent (s58).
XII	s59–61	Confirmation of participation	DF asks whether NT agrees (s59a–c) and if so why one should not participate (s59d). NT confirms (s60). DF reformulates her political statement as an everyday saying (s61a–d).
XII	s62–72	Consensus	DF mentions other reasons for the participation, cf. students exchange (s65) NT concurs (s66, 67).

Hoffman (1999) the naming of inhabitants in the singular – as is done in *der Amerikaner* – may function as a proper as well as a generic noun. The primary function of proper nouns is to identify people, whereas generic nouns have the function of characterizing people. Interestingly, the use of nouns in the singular may realise both functions at the same time and, therefore, have a strong potential for evoking self-evidential and often stereotypical knowledge (see also ten Thije to appear). Consequently, s38 DF not only identifies the inhabitants of Germany and the USA as belonging to opposing nation states, but also characterizes them as being engaged in a hegemonial world competition. This is a strong political statement. For many inhabitants in the former East Germany, the system change in Eastern Europe caused the need to reformulate international relationships of the former West and East Germany with their international partners, of which the USA and Russia are the most important. The

political statement causes surprise. The Dutchman signals his non-acceptance with slight, ironic laughter (s52).

This peculiar political statement from the German official and the reactions of the Dutchman can be considered as a 'rich point' (Agar 1994; cit. in ten Thije 2002), since these utterances evoke astonishment about the mutual foreignness of the German and the Dutchman in the actual discourse. Their interaction cannot be interpreted from their institutional positions alone and, therefore, one may question whether the interculturality of their interaction can be reconstructed by starting from this section. In actual fact, this excerpt was presented and discussed on several international occasions¹ and caused heated discussions between discourse analysts from Western and Eastern Germany as well as between colleagues from various European countries on the one hand, and Americans at the other. The statement was interpreted in contrasting ways: either as a reformulation of East German Cold War rhetoric or as a formulation of new German imperialism. I do not mention these interpretations to evaluate them, but to underpin my reasons for focusing on this excerpt. The rich point in this excerpt needs detailed reconstruction by making use of all the recordings, data, interviews, presentations and discussions that has been organised in recent years. Koole and ten Thije (2001) and ten Thije (2002) contain an account of this approach of analysing intercultural discourse.

Generalizing, perspectivising and contrasting cultural standards

On the basis of the description of the overall structure in the previous paragraph and taking the rich point of the political statement as a starting point, we focus on four stretches of discourse in which knowledge of the propositional content is generalized and, subsequently, perspectivized in order to enable the interactants to make a comparison between the differences between their cultural standards. This verbalization sequence supports intercultural understanding. In the presentation, the analysis will be structured according to these three verbalization steps:

Step 1: by *generalising*, an interactant verbalizes the knowledge of the propositional content as a cultural standard.

Step 2: by *perspectivising*, the speaker transmits the knowledge of the propositional content in the actual speech situation by taking into account cultural standards of *the other*.

Step 3: by *contrasting cultures*, the speaker enables the hearer to compare the speaker's cultural standards with his own and attain an adequate interpretation of the discourse.

As the analysis will make clear, these steps are not always distinct in the sequence of discourse, but for analytical reasons, they will be kept apart.

Non-understanding of unsatisfactory student exchange

The first excerpt is located in sections I and II, in which DF introduces the problem of unsatisfactory participation in exchange programmes to Russia by German students. This is the first time in the discussion that this theme is discussed. From the verbalization of her problem it becomes clear that the German official anticipates potential cultural ignorance on the part of her Dutch colleague.

Excerpt 11

- 1
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | [^{1a} Und wenn es dann um Studenten geht, [^{1b} dann wird es sowieso
And with respect to students, it won't be that |
|---|----|--|
- 2
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | nicht ganz so einfach sein [^{1c} Studenten/ [^{1d} zwar n/nach /ähm in
easy anyway it is true to get students em |
| NT | [² Ja.
Yes |
- 3
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | die Niederlande zu bekommen, [^{1e} das ist nicht das Problem,
into the Netherlands. that's not the problem, |
|----|--|
- 4
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|---|
| > | DF | ! [^{1f} aber Studenten nach RuSSland zu schicken [^{1g} ist schon nicht
but to send students to Russia that is really not |
| NT | [³ Nein.
No. | |
- 5
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | ganz so einfach. [^{4a} Vielleicht für Sie/ [^{4b} (hh) für die Niederlän-
that easy. Maybe for you, for the Dutch |
|----|---|
- 6
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | der nicht so problematisch wie für die XXXXXXXXXXXX?
it's not as problematic as for the XXXXXXXXXXXX? |
| NT | [⁵ Um ein
To get |

According to my general description of the three steps of verbalising knowledge in a propositional content, the first phase concerns *generalizing* the knowledge as a cultural standard solution. Let us have a close look at segment 1a-b-c-f and see whether this type of verbalizing takes place:

[^{1a}Und wenn es dann um Studenten geht, [^{1b}dann wird es sowieso nicht so einfach sein ... studenten nach Russland zu schicken
And with respect to students, it won't be that easy anyway ... to send students to Russia

The knowledge that is transferred in these segments does not concern a standard solution, but a standard problem. From a feedback interview with DF, it appears that officials in former East Germany had and continue to have lots of problems with respect to students participating in exchange programmes with their former 'helper' and 'big brother' in the former Soviet Union. After the system change in Eastern Europe, German officials have had to develop a new relationship with Russian institutions. One of the domains for these new developments concerns student exchange programmes. DF states in s1 that one can no longer *send* students to Russia as was usually done in East Germany. Nowadays, students have their own responsibility and freedom and, therefore, have to be motivated to participate in exchange programmes. In sum, in s1 the German official verbalizes a recurrent problem for a specific cultural group, namely citizens – and especially officials – in the former East Germany. This construction, in which the students become the role of object, contributes to the general validity of the assertion, as does the use of the linguistic expression 'sowieso' (*in any case*).

In the second phase (perspectivising), the interactant inserts the knowledge into the actual speech situation by taking into account cultural standards of *the other*. In s1c–e we find the following example.

[^{1c}Studenten/ [^{1d}zwar n/nach /ähm in die Niederlande zu bekommen,
 [^{1e}das ist nicht das Problem,
it is true to get students em into the Netherlands, that's not the problem

Directly after formulating the general problem in s1a–b, DF interrupts herself by adapting her assertion in two ways. On the one hand she explicitly mentions the Netherlands, which is the native country of NT. On the other hand DF restarts her construction in s1c–d and changes the preposition from *nach* into *in*. The former belongs with the verb *schicken nach* (*to send to*), whereas *in* corresponds to the verb *bekommen in* (*to receive*). The verbs *schicken nach* and *bekommen in* are complementary with respect to the depicted direction of

movement. *Schicken nach* relates to the person who is sending away, where as *bekommen in* relates to the person who is receiving. This repair is an example of a semantic *switch of perspective* (Zifonun 1997). The repair of these contrasting verbs as well as the mention of NT's native country locates the propositional content in the actual speech situation in which the German and Dutchman interact. The problem of exchanges for former East German officials is now verbalized as a problem that also exists in the Netherlands, but not to the same degree. The Dutchman acknowledges this in s3.

The segments 1d–e can be considered as a neat example of the communication apparatus of *perspectivising*. The overall plan of the speaker in s1a–g changes during the ongoing discourse. The speaker plan changes even before the central propositional content is verbalized in s1f–g. The analysis cannot determine whether the hearer is not reacting in the way DF expected, or whether DF solely anticipates possible ignorance by NT. From the non-verbal actions of NT it would be possible to have extracted some relevant interpretation, but since video data are not available, such reactions are not open to analysis. Nevertheless, it is clear that DF changes her speaker plan in order to support the hearer with more culturally adapted knowledge.

In the third phase (*contrasting*), the interactant enables the hearer to compare the speaker's cultural standards with his own and attain an adequate interpretation of the discourse. Segment 1d–f illustrates this phase clearly:

^{1d}zwar n/nach /ähm in die Niederlande zu bekommen, [^{1e}das ist nicht das Problem, ^{1f}aber Studenten nach Russland zu schicken ist nicht ganz so einfach
it is true to get students em into the Netherlands, that's not the problem but to send students to Russia that is really not that easy

The stretches of discourse 1d and 1f are connected to each other with the conjunctions *zwar ... aber* (*it is true ... but*). This connection brings about a comparison between the cultural standards with respect to the international exchange between the former East Germany and the Netherlands and Russia respectively. The subsequent segment (4a–b) contains an example of the combination of *perspectivising* and *contrasting*.

[^{4a}Vielleicht für Sie/ [^{4b}(hh) für die Niederländer nich so problematisch wie für die XXXXXXXXXXXX?
Maybe for you/ for the it's not as problematic as for the XXXXXXXXXXXX?

With respect to *perspectivising* the direct address of NT and the illocution of segment 4 should be mentioned: speaker DF addresses NT directly by making

use of the deictic procedure *Sie* (*you*). Subsequently, she realises a self-initiated self repair, in which she makes use of the symbolic procedure *die Niederländer* (*the Dutch*). Zifonun (1997: 1604) determines such an insertion as an *attributive Adjunktorphrase* (*attributive adjunct*), by which the speaker categorizes NT as a member of the cultural group or as a citizen of his nation state. This insertion can be also reconstructed as the result of perspectivising the communication since the speaker plan changes during the ongoing discourse. The speech action in s4 contributes to perspectivising the knowledge in the actual speech situation, as DF poses a question, so that NT has to refresh his knowledge in order to give an answer.

With respect to contrasting, it is important to mention that the segment s4a–b is structured as a comparison. The construction *für X nicht so Y, wie für Z* (*it is not as Y for X as it is for Z*) facilitates a comparison between two entities and determines a dimension for comparison as well. Finally, the use of the adverb *vielleicht* (*perhaps*) indicates the speaker's degree of uncertainty with respect to her knowledge of the hearer's cultural standards.

In sum, this section illustrates the three steps of verbalising cultural knowledge into propositional content. By making use of generalising, perspectivising and contrasting cultural standards, the speaker enables the hearer to attain intercultural understanding. From his reaction, it should become clear whether the hearer actually understands the speaker, if the former takes over the hearer side of the realised speech action patterns in an expected way. With respect to the first step (generalising), I had already mentioned the acknowledgement of NT in s3. Whether the hearer understands the perspectivized verbalization cannot be determined on the basis of the hearer reaction in this section. However, the hearer takes the hearer side in the question and answer pattern initiated in s4, since he formulates a counter question in s5. This counter question is an adequate reaction to a question, so in a formal sense he cooperates in the interaction. When we look at the propositional content, we see that NT formulates one possible problem that hinders students' participating in the exchange. In s5, he asks; *Um ein Visum zu bekommen, oder?* (*To get visa, or what do you mean?*). From his counter question, it is possible to conclude that NT understands the general scope of the standard cultural problem. However, the quintessence of the standard cultural problem is not yet understood, as also becomes clear from the augmented speech action (Rehbein 1979), *oder?* (*or what do you mean?*). This understanding is attained in the following section.

Understanding travel restrictions

The next excerpt is directly connected to the previous, and concerns sections II and III: NT inquires whether students have visa problems (s7), and demonstrates non-understanding of DF's definition of the problem (s8, s10). DF acknowledges this. Subsequently, NT asks whether students are not interested at all in international exchange programmes (s11). Thereafter, DF explains their lack of interest due to the travel restrictions under Soviet regimes (s12a–c) and their current preference for France (s12d–f). NT demonstrates his understanding of the problem (s14) and accepts her explanation (s15, 16, 17, 18, 20).

Excerpt 12

- 10
- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| DF | > \ \ | [⁹ Ja. [¹¹ Ja. [^{12a} Jaa, wissen Sie, |
| NT | -sind? [¹⁰ Ja? [¹² Sind Leute nicht interessiert? | Yes. Yes. Yes, you know, |
| | Yeah? Are people not interested? | |
- 11
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | [^{12b} wenn Sie vierzig Jahre lang nur die eine Richtung hatten, |
| NT | [¹⁴ aha |
| | if you could only go in one direction for forty years |
- 12
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | [^{12c} und die hieß Sowjetunion, [^{12d} dann können Sie sich vielleicht |
| NT | [¹⁵ ((hhh) [¹⁶ Jetzt/ [¹⁷ Ja. |
| | and that was to the Soviet Union, then you might be able |
| | Now/ Yeah. |
- 13
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | [^{12e} dass man vielleicht eher nach Frankreich geht als |
| NT | [^{12f} also jetzt nach Russland. |
| | to imagine that one would maybe rather go to France than |
| | to/ to/ to the Soviet Union, or Russia as it is now. |
- 14

DF's explanation in the excerpt above is structured according to the three steps of verbalization. Segment 12 is constructed as a conditional sentence by means of the conjunctions *wenn ...*, *dann...* (*if ... then...*). The conditional parts (s12b) contain sentential knowledge that represents a generalised standard solution of the former East Germans with respect to their restricted international mobility:

^{12b}wenn Sie vierzig Jahre lang nur die eine Richtung hatten [^{12c}und die hieß Sowjetunion, [^{12d}dann können Sie sich vielleicht vorstellen,

If you could only go one direction for forty years and that was to the Soviet Union, then you might be able to imagine

In subsequent segments in s12c–d, the verbalisation of the standard cultural solution is *perspectived* by a combination of linguistic means: first of all, s12d contains an insertion after the expression *die eine Richtung* (*only one direction*) by naming its nationality: *und die hieß Sowjetunion* (*and that was the Soviet Union*). Secondly, the use of the past tense in 12c orientates the hearer to the time before the system change in Eastern Europe and indicates the distance between the current speech situation and the recent past. Thirdly, the hearer is personally addressed twice in s12b and 12d with *Sie* (*you*) and, finally, the illocution of the speech action in 12c realises a request to the hearer (*stellen sie sich vor, imagine*) to open up an imaginary space. With these different linguistic means the speaker locates the knowledge for the propositional content in the current speech situation.

Subsequently, DF contrasts the speaker's and hearer's standard solutions with respect to international mobility.

[^{12e}dass man vielleicht eher nach Frankreich geht als in/ in/ in die Sowjetunion, [^{12f}also jetzt nach Russland.
that one would maybe rather go to France than to/ to/ to the Soviet Union, or Russia as it is now.

These segments (s12e–f) contain a comparison by making use of *eher ... als* (*rather ... than*). This comparison considers France and Russia to be two possible contrasting destinations for international exchanges. The use of general *man* (*one*) in 12e underlines that the comparison considers two collective standard solutions to international mobility before and after the system change (Bredel 1999). Moreover, the use of *man* in the formulation of the new standard solution for the speaker's groups may include the cultural standard solution for the hearer as well.

Subsequently, the recent mobility problems for people in Eastern Germany are illustrated very nice linguistically, in DF's repair in s12e–f, as she falters *in/ in/ in die Soviet Union* (*to, to, to the Soviet Union*), and, subsequently, inserts the supplement *also jetzt nach Russland* (*thus now to Russia*). Within one utterance she refers twice to the name change of Russia into the Soviet Union and vice versa. Interestingly, the use of the present tense *geht* (*goes*) in s12e corresponds to the current destination of France, but not to the destination the Soviet Union, since it is now impossible to go the Soviet Union. This contradiction is solved by her insertion containing the name of the nation state

a second time. The use of *also* (thus) at the beginning of s12f is characterised by Bührig (1996:240) as a supplement to previously verbalised knowledge and secures the hearer's understanding. Finally, we can refer to the use of the adverb *vielleicht* (*perhaps*) in s12e that can be interpreted as an indication of the speaker's uncertainty with respect to the choice between the many destinations for exchanges, of which France is only one possibility.

The hearer clearly shows his understanding of the general standard problem as in s14 he says *aha*. According to Hoffmann (1997:407) this interjection has the function of indicating the successful resolution of a problem solving process. NT has reconstructed the standard problem that DF has verbalized up to then. Subsequently, NT affirms his understanding of the historical distancing of the former Soviet Union from present-day Russia by saying *jetzt* (*now*) in s16.

In sum, this section also illustrates the three steps of verbalising cultural knowledge into propositional content. Moreover, we see how the hearer acknowledges his understanding.

Understanding redundant foreign language learning

The third fragment contains only two of the verbalising steps, namely generalising and perspectivising. The contrasting of cultural standard fails. After generalising the problem of learning Russian as a foreign language, DH perspectivises this standard problem by giving voice to imaginary students who refuse to go to Russia. However, no comparison to the hearer's cultural standards is voiced. In contrast, the construction of an imaginary dialogue of a student contributes to the hearer relating to the represented collective problem of students in the former East Germany (Tannen 1989). The hearer acknowledges his acceptance several times. Brünner (1989) also analyses constructed dialogues and comes to the same conclusions.

Hinzu kommt ^{32b}dass das/ dass das Russische uns als Fremdsprache/³³Ich hab es zwölf oder fünfzehn Jahre lernen müssen und hab da nie Lust dazu gehabt.^{34a} Hm ja, und so gibt es natürlich noch paar mehr Studenten, ^{34b}die das haben lernen müssen ohne irgendeinen Effekt damit zu erzielen ^{34c}und die jetzt einfach sagen ^{34d}“Ich will nicht.” ^{34e}“Na es ist zu/^{34f}Ich muss NICHT mehr ^{34g}und ich will auch nicht mehr.”

Furthermore, that the/ that Russian us as foreign language/ I had to learn it for ten or twelve years, and never felt like doing it. Hm. yeah. And there are definitely some more Students who had to learn it without achieving any-

thing with it and who are just saying now: "I don't want it." Well, it is to/ "I DON'T have to anymore. and I don't want to anymore."

In the feedback interview the German official explains the historical background of foreign language learning in relation to international exchange programmes.

We lived in a country in which Russian was the first foreign language and where the Soviet Union was our Friend and Helper. That is a fixed expression. Perhaps only an East German can understand what Friend and Helper means; in a sense it refers to Big Brother and that was the Soviet Union. (...) We were an 'appendix'; we were a 'political outpost'. Well, you can link that now with everything you know about the Cold War and the Iron Curtain etc. And so we were simply the tip of the spear or a 'lighthouse' or whatever you want to call it. That was the political requirement, and, consequently the first foreign language was Russian and other languages came later. And despite that, you still couldn't even visit the country. I personally went to Russia for the first time in 1992. (Feedback interview 23.06.98/11)²

This quote clearly illustrates the standard cultural solution for former East Germans concerning their international mobility. In fact, it shows the paradox of this solution as well. The collective standard with respect to international exchanges that had '*only one direction, and that was the Soviet Union*' was only ideological, since these exchanges were not open to ordinary people. The German official made her first trip to Russia only after the system change in Germany in 1989.

Disagreement concerning the international political importance

The fourth excerpt contains the rich point that initiated this analysis in the first place. After the interactants agree on the problems regarding the students' exchange programme, the Dutchman introduces a new problem, namely NT asks whether DF is still convinced that the international project makes sense (s42a–d). DF confirms the relevance of the project (s43a) by referring to the assistance in curriculum development, which NT accepts (s44). DF states her conviction (s45a) that the content of the curriculum that was developed in the former West Germany (s45b–c) and is now being practised in the former East Germany (s45d) is of good quality (s45e). NT accepts this (s46, s47); DF apologises for her lack of professional knowledge (s48a–b), but repeats her conviction (s48c–d). NT acknowledges (s49) this. DF formulates sentential knowledge (s50a) concerning the potential American hegemony over Germany in the world (s50b), which NT does not understand (s51). DF reaffirms her

statements (s50–55). NT laughs (s52) and acknowledges this with slight dissent (s56).

Excerpt 13

- 37 DF den äh Lehrplänen. [^{44a}Das/ Davon bin ich überzeugt, [^{44b}dass
with er the curriculum. That/ I am convinced that
NT [⁴⁵ Hm.
Mh.
- 38 DF das was auf der Strecke der Sozialpädagogik gemacht
what has been done in the field of social pedagogic in
- 39 DF worden ist in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{44c}also im
the Federal German Republic. Well in
NT [⁴⁶ Ja.
Yeah.
- 40 DF Westen, [^{44d}Äh was jetzt auch hier bei uns gemacht wird,
the West. Er what has also been done now here by us,
- 41 DF [^{44d}das halt ich für sehr positiv. [^{48a}Vom vo grob/ [^{48b} Ich hab
I think it is something very positiv. Well, roughly/ I do
NT [⁴⁷ Hm.
Hm.
- 42 DF da nich viel Ahnung von, [^{48c}aber ich bin davon überzeugt, [^{48d}dass
not know much about it, but I am convinced that it is
NT [⁴⁹ Hm
Hm
- 43 > ! !
DF [es in Ordnung ist. [^{50a}Und ich sage immer wieder: [^{50b} "Da wo
okay But I say over and over again: "If
- 44 DF wir nicht sind, [^{50c}als Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{50d}ist der
we are not present, as Federal Republik of Germany the
- 45 > /\ !
DF Amerikaner." [^{50a}Ja, [^{52b}dann haben Sie halt das amerika-
American will be." Yeah, then you/they just have the American
NT [⁵¹ Und dann?
And then?

DF's explanation of the relevance of the international project in this excerpt contains the three steps of verbalizing knowledge: generalising, perspectivising and contrasting. Let us have a closer look at the steps:

Her explanation contains the *generalising* verbalisation of a positive personal assessment (Ehlich & Rehbein 1977) of the results of academic research in the field of social pedagogy. This assessment concerns institutional knowledge for officials at school. In fact this knowledge concerns the development of cultural standard solutions for standard problems. The statement sounds as follows:

^{44a}Das/ Davon bin ich überzeugt, [^{44b}dass das was auf der Strecke der Sozialpädagogik gemacht worden ist in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, ^{44d}das halt ich für sehr positiv.

That/ I am convinced that what has been done in the field of social pedagogy in the Federal German Republic is positive.

Interestingly, in s44c she *perspectivizes* her assessment by relating the knowledge to the current speech situation.

[^{44c}also im Westen, [^{44d}Äh was jetzt auch hier bei uns gemacht wird
Well in the West. Er what has also been done now here with us,

First of all, she adapts *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* with the expression *also im Westen* (*thus in the West*). By making use of the *also*, this concerns the same sort of insertion as we saw before in s12f. This supplement restricts the range of Germany to the *former West* Germany, to the *old* federal states. Subsequently, she verbalizes an apposition, in which she supports the hearer with supplementary knowledge about the current relevance of social pedagogy. Interestingly, she realises the deictic procedure *wir* (*we*), which may include or exclude the hearer. This plural speaker deixis, however, orientates the hearer towards the new federal states (former East Germany). In actual fact, DF orientates NT in particular towards the university in which both participants work. The speaker *contrasts* the results of the discipline of social pedagogy in western and eastern Germany. At the same time she addresses the hearer as a member of the local university by using the deictic procedures *hier bei uns* (*here with us*) in s44d. She thus locates the knowledge of the propositional content to the current speech situation and enables the hearer to assess the propositional content from his newly acquired institutional position. The hearer acknowledges his acceptance in s46 (*ja, yes*) and s47 (*hm*).

Subsequently, in s48a–d she apologises for her lack of professional knowledge, which she compensates for by uttering her conviction that the academic content of social pedagogy is okay. Then she utters s50a–d:

[^{50a}Und ich sage immer wieder: [^{50b}“Da wo wir nicht sind, [^{50c}als Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{50d}ist der Amerikaner”.

But I say over and over again: “If we are not present, as Federal Republic of Germany, the American will be”.

In Section 4, I analysed the generic use of the noun *der Amerikaner*. This marks the national division between Germany and the USA. The personification of the national division is enforced by the attributive Adjunktorphrase (attributive adjunct) (Zifonun 1997: 1604), in which the speaker reformulates the personal deictic procedure *wir* by using the symbolic procedure *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. She thus excludes the hearer from the range of persons that the personal deictic procedure is orientated to. Although he was included as a member of the same university in s44d, he is now excluded since he is not of the same nationality.

The marking of ethnic and national boundaries has been studied frequently in studies on intercultural discourse (Barth 1969; Erickson & Schultz 1982; Koole & ten Thije 1994; Day this volume). Ten Thije (2003) analyses the indication of ethnic boundaries as the realisation of an intercultural pattern of ‘thematizing and dethematizing ethnicity’. The thematizer of an ethnic boundary may use specific discourse tactics in order to decrease the potential threat of marking the ethnic boundary, for instance by using the ‘alibi tactic’. Following this alibi tactic an authority is quoted in the formulation of the ethnic boundary. As a consequence, the speaker himself is held less responsible for the interactive effect of the formulation. When we analyse segment 50 it is apparent that DF is not quoting someone else. On the contrary, she clearly introduces herself as an authority, as she says in s50a: *Und ich sage immer wieder* (*And as I always says*). She introduces herself as an expert. Therefore, she can be held responsible for the interactive effect of her defining an ethnic boundary.

In the feedback interview DF explains the background of her statement. She refers to the marketing strategy of American universities with respect to the successful distribution of their curriculum all over the world. She states:

If Germany as a country does not take off its blinkers as far as its educational policy is concerned and finally grasps that the world has been divided up or is still being divided up, or perhaps there might even still be chances somewhere to acquire a share of the world market, then it is simply that if we don’t try, others will make an effort. And by others, I really do refer to America in

particular. That is not meant to paint them as an enemy, but what I want to underline here is that it simply is that way because they have a completely different approach in the world as far as educational policy is concerned. And in the Soviet Union there was a unique constellation, that the biggest enemies in world political terms until about 1989, although not exactly became the best of friends, the continuous conflict has naturally made them curious, both the Russians and the Americans. (23.06.98/12)³

In the discourse, however, the Dutchman does not understand the formulation of the ethnic boundary as a critical comment towards the passive marketing strategy of the German educational policy. He asks what will be the consequence of the USA taking over.

Agreement concerning institutional importance

The last excerpt concerns section X and XI in the diagram above, in which DF adapts her political statement by referring to the interests of the German nation state (s57a), as well as the interests of each university (s57b) in transferring curriculum models (s57c) that are considered to be of high quality (s57d–g). As NT acknowledges this with slight dissent (s58), DF asks whether NT agrees with her statement (s59a–c) and if not why one should not participate in the international project (s59d). NT agrees (s60). Finally, DF adapts her political statement into an everyday saying (s61a–d).

Excerpt 14

- 48 DF > eigentlich muss die Bundesrepublik daran interessiert
 L actually Germany has to be interested in it,
- 49 DF sein, [^{57b}eigentlich muss jede Ho/Hochschule daran interes-
 L actually every u/ university has to be interested
- 50 DF > !
 L siert sein, [^{57c}dass die Ausbildungsmodelle, [^{57d}die/ für die
 L in it, that the education models, which/ for which
- 51 DF wir ja auch stehen [^{57e}und sagen [^{57f}“Die sind gut”, [^{57g}dass die
 L we stand for and say: “They are good”. That they

- 52
- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| DF | > | auch in andere Länder getragen werden. [^{59a} Ja. [^{59b} Oder wenn |
| | └ | are also taken to other countries. Yes. Or if you |
| | | /\ |
| NT | > | [⁵⁸ Jaja Ja. |
| | └ | Yeahyeah. Yes. |
- 53
- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| DF | > | Sie schon der Meinung sind, [^{59c} dass das so ist, [^{59d} warum soll |
| | └ | already are of the opinion that it is just like that why |
- 54
- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| DF | > | man es dann nicht tun. [^{61a} Na, [^{61b} und Sie wissen [^{61c} “Immer wo |
| | └ | should one not do it then. No, and you know: “Wherever |
| NT | > | [⁶⁰ Jaja. |
| | └ | Yeahyeah. |
- 55
- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| DF | > | der eine nich ist, [^{61d} ist der . grad ein anderer.“ [⁶² Und wir haben |
| | └ | one person is not present the other one will be.” |

In reaction to the Dutchman's disagreement, DF reshapes her statement. Her arguments now consist of a string of statements that state the importance of the international project for the distribution of good curriculum models. She starts at a national level and then repeats her statement relating it to the institutional level of every university. In fact, she generalises her knowledge about international educational marketing as a standard solution.

eigentlich muss die Bundesrepublik daran interessiert sein, [^{57b}eigentlich muss jede Ho/Hochschule daran interessiert sein, [^{57c}dass die Ausbildungsmodelle, [^{57d}dass die auch in andere Länder getragen werden, *Actually Germany has to be interested in it, actually every u/ university has to be interested in it, that the education models which / That they are also taken to other countries.*

Subsequently, in s57c she perspectives her knowledge in the current speech situation by using the personal deictic procedure *we* that includes speaker and hearer. Then she constructs a dialogue that expresses a clear, positive evaluation.

[^{57d}die/ für die wir ja auch stehen [^{57e}und sagen [^{57f}“Die sind gut”, *which/ for which we stand for and say: “They are good”.*

Moreover, she addresses the hearer directly, by asking him the question as to whether he already agrees with her statement. By assuming a positive answer,

she asks the hearer why one should not cooperate. Interestingly, she generalises again by using the genetic form *man* (*one*).

[^{59b}Oder wenn [^{59b}Oder wenn Sie schon der Meinung sind, [^{59c}dass das so ist, [^{59d}warum soll man es dann nicht tun. [^{61a}Na,
Or if you have already of the opinion that it is like that why should one do it then.

Finally, she repeats her political statement, but without determining any national boundaries. She notes:

[^{61b}und Sie wissen [^{61c}“Immer wo der eine nich ist, [^{61d}ist der . grad ein anderer.”
No, and you know: “Wherever one person is not present the other one will be.”

Whereas she introduced herself in s50 as an expert on the topic, she now announces the statement with the presupposition that the hearer already knows this. Moreover she makes use of what Koole and ten Thije (1994) have called a *dethematising tactic*, since this adaptation in s57 consists of the parallel construction as in s50. However, the evaluation scales make use of another criterion. No longer is nationality the criterion to evaluate whether there is a place on earth, but the criterion does not express any details about the values being used; it is completely neutral.

In the feedback interview she explains the marketing strategy, by stating:

I have permitted myself to include [the Dutchman] in using this ‘we’. I use this kind of ‘we’ very often, because in my opinion this ‘we’ gets a raw deal in this university. What the Americans call corporate identity is scarcely expressed at this university. In fact, I believe this ‘we’ is very important and this is what results in the frustration that comes across here. (23.06.98/19)⁴

The Dutchman agrees with her statement, by acknowledging it. The argument based on nationality has been replaced by an ‘institutional argument’ that rests on the common institutional interest of both speaker and hearer.

Conclusion

This analysis has shown how making use of a combination of verbalising steps, which I have called generalising, perspectivising and contrasting cultural standards can attain intercultural understanding. The analysis does not argue that

this combination is the only way to way to attain intercultural understanding. However, this combination is specific to intercultural communication because these steps are constituted in particular by the fact that different cultural standards are represented in intercultural discourse.

Finally, I want to use the notion of *perspective* as it is used in mathematics in order to illustrate the verbalising steps that are discussed in this paper. In mathematics the notion of *perspective* is the organising principle of the representation of a three dimensional space on a plane surface. In this context the notion of *perspective* is always combined with the notions of *horizon*, *standpoint* and *aspect*. An object is designed in front of a horizon as the collection of all vanishing points. The aspect is what can be seen of an object from a given standpoint. By changing the standpoint the aspect of the visualised object changes.

The function of the three verbalising steps can be illustrated as follows. Let us take the abstract problem X that is being discussed in intercultural discourse. By generalising knowledge about X as a cultural standard the speaker establishes a *horizon* behind X in a common knowledge space for speaker and hearer. By perspectivising the knowledge about X in the actual speech situation the speaker establishes a *standpoint* for the speaker and for the hearer taking into account their horizons in their common knowledge space. Finally, by contrasting these cultural standards a connection is established between the aspects that both speaker and the hearer may see from their different standpoints in their common knowledge space. This connection between these different aspects can be considered as the accomplishment of intercultural understanding.

At the end of this chapter, I would like to return to the three questions I mentioned at the beginning with respect to the appeal of the notion of *perspective*.

Firstly, the studies discussed in Sections 3.1–3.7 show how very different linguistic phenomena can be brought together under the heading of *perspective* or *perspectivation*. In a sense, these analyses illustrate the power of a good metaphor. In Section 3.7 I have argued that these conceptions of perspectivity refer to different aspects of the process of intercultural understanding.

Secondly, the Gumperz example clearly illustrates how *taking the other perspective* is a fruitful research strategy that is applied in many other analyses of intracultural and intercultural communication. In Section 4 I have presented the three steps of verbalising the propositional content. These verbalising steps illustrate how the relationship between discourse and society or culture can be conceptualised.

Thirdly, although I did not present a complete reconstruction of the use of *perspective* in intercultural communication and linguistics, I hope to have drawn plausible conclusions as to how *perspective* covers many different phenomena in the periphery of what De Saussure has defined as the object of linguistics. That means that *perspective* has served as vehicle for new research questions. To what extent these questions have always got satisfactory answers, may become clear, for instance, if we evaluate the solutions of various recent grammars such as what German IDS Grammar (Zifonun 1997) have chosen in the cases where they used the notion of *perspective*. However, that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Notes

1. This fragment was presented and discussed at the following occasions: the 4th International Functional Pragmatics Conference, on 20–22 November, 1997 in Münster; the Winter workshop on language and cultural difference in Germany, 9–10 January, 1998 at the Centre for Applied Linguistic Research, Thames Valley, University of London; and the Hamburg-Münsteraner Workshop on Pragmatics and Language Learning, 16 January, 1998 at Hamburg University. I should like to thank all the participants in these discussions for their comments. I also thank Kristin Bührig and Anne Ribbert for their comments on earlier drafts of this article.
2. Original text of the feedback interview: “Wir haben in einem Land gelebt, in dem Russisch die erste Fremdsprache war und in dem die Sowjetunion unser Freund und Helfer war, das ist eine feststehende Wendung, die dann auch vielleicht nur jeder Ostdeutsche versteht, was ein Freund und Helfer ist, also sprich der grosse Bruder und das war die Sowjetunion. (...) Wir waren ein Anhängsel, wir waren ein politischer Vorposten, nun, sie können das jetzt mit allem belegen, was den kalten Krieg anbelangt und den eisernen Vorhang, etc. Und waren halt so diese Speerspitze oder dieser Leuchtturm oder wie Sie’s auch immer benennen wollen. Das war politisch gewollt, demzufolge war die erste Fremdsprache russisch. Und dann kamen die anderen Fremdsprachen hinterher. Und trotzdem konnte man das Land ja nicht bereisen, ich persönlich bin 1992 das erste Mal in Russland gewesen” (23.06.98/6,7).
3. Original text of the feedback interview: “Wenn die Bundesrepublik als Staat mit ihrer Bildungspolitik nicht aus dem Knick kommt und endlich begreift, dass die Welt aufgeteilt ist, oder man noch immer am Aufteilen ist, oder vielleicht gibt’s noch irgendwo Chancen, Marktanteile zu gewinnen, dann ist es halt so, dass wo wir nicht sind, sich andere darum bemühen. Und mit ‘andere’ meine ich eben sehr stark Amerika, das ist kein Feindbild, was ich da aufbauen will und werde, aber es ist halt so, weil sie ein ganz anderes Herangehen haben auf der gesamten Welt was Bildungspolitik anbelangt und grade in der Sowjetunion gab es ja so eine eigenartige Konstellation, dass die grössten Feinde, jetzt mal weltpolitisch gesehen bis ’89, oder wie auch immer, nich gerade zu grossen Freunden geworden sind, aber

dieser unendliche Gegensatz hat natürlich neugierig gemacht. Sowohl für die Russen als für die Amerikaner” (23.06.98/12).

4. Original text of the feedback interview: “Ich hab mir also erlaubt, den Niederländer hier zu (kooptieren) und in mein ‘wir’ miteinzuschliessen. Ich gebrauche das sehr häufig, dieses ‘wir’, weil (...) es mir ein bisschen zu kurz kommt, dieses ‘wir’ an unserer Universität (...) Diese, wie die Amerikaner, dieses nennen corporate identity, ist null ausgeprägt oder ganz gering ausgeprägt und ich glaube, dass das halt sehr sehr notwendig ist, und das ist ein bisschen der Frust, der hier reinspielt.”

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Transcription conventions

verbal communication line

/	repair
()	not understood
(walks)	good guess
((1 sec.))	pause of 1 second
.	pause of less than 1 second
((laughs))	naming a verbal activity
? Hm	not certain which speaker uttered 'Hm'
[₁ Hm ₁]	information on the section between brackets is given under the score
[¹	number of segment
[^{1a}	number of subsegment
. (full stop)	sentence final falling intonation
,	non sentence final rising intonation
?	sentence final rising intonation

intonation line

!	stress
-	lengthened
/	rising intonation
\	falling intonation
v	doubling
^	shortened

Appendix: Transcript

DF: German official

NT: Dutch lecturer

- 1
 >
 DF [1^aUnd wenn es dann um Studenten geht, [1^bdann wird es sowieso
 And with respect to students, it won't be that
- 2
 DF nicht ganz so einfach sein [1^cStudenten/ [1^dzwar n/nach /ähm in
 easy anyway it is true that to get students em
 NT [2² Ja.
 Yes
- 3
 DF die Niederlande zu bekommen, [1^edas ist nicht das Problem,
 into the Netherlands, that's not the problem
- 4
 >
 DF [1^faber Studenten nach Russland zu schicken [1^gist schon nicht
 but to send students to Russia that is really not
 NT [3³Nein.
 No.
- 5
 DF ganz so einfach. [4^aVielleicht für Sie/ [4^b(hh) für die Niederlän-
 that easy. Maybe for you, for the Dutch
- 6
 DF der nich so problematisch wie für die Xxxxxxxxxx?
 it's not as problematic as for the Xxxxxxxxxx?
 NT [5⁵Um ein
 To get
- 7
 DF [6^aNee oh nee das nicht, [6^baber um
 No oh no that's not it, but
 NT Visum zu bekommen, oder?
 a visa, do you mean?
- 8
 DF überhaupt Interessenten zu bekommen die nach Yyyyyyyy
 to get people who would be interested in going to Yyyyyyyy
- 9
 >
 DF gehen zum Studium. [7⁷Das meine ich.
 to study, that's what I mean.
 >
 NT [8⁸Die daar interessiert
 Who are interested there?

- 10
- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------------------------|
| > | \ \ | \ |
| DF | [⁹ Ja. [¹¹ Ja. | [^{12a} Jaa, wissen Sie, |
| | Yes. Yes. | Yes, you know, |
| NT | sind? [¹⁰ Ja? [¹² Sind Leute nicht interessiert? | |
| | Yeah? Are people not interested? | |
- 11
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | [^{12b} wenn Sie vierzig Jahre lang nur die eine Richtung hatten, |
| | if you could only go in one direction for forty years |
| NT | [¹⁴ aha |
- 12
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | [^{12c} und die hieß Sowjetunion, [^{12d} dann können Sie sich vielleicht |
| | and that was to the Soviet Union, then you might be able |
- 13
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | vorstellen, [^{12e} dass man vielleicht eher nach Frankreich geht als |
| | to imagine that one would maybe rather go to France than |
| NT | [¹⁵ ((hhh) [¹⁶ Jetzt/ [¹⁷ Ja. |
| | Now/ Yeah. |
- 14
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | in/ in/ in die Sowjetunion, [^{12f} also jetzt nach Russland |
| | to/ to/ to the Soviet Union, or Russia as it is now. |
- 15
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | geht. [¹⁹ Sag ich jetzt einfach mal so. [^{21a} Ja. [^{22b} Also wenn man |
| | Put it like that. Yeah. So, if one |
| NT | [¹⁸ Ja. [²⁰ Ja. |
| | Yes. Yes. |
- 16
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | jetzt äh dreißig Jahre lang erzählt:[^{22c} "Da muss ich hinfah- |
| | just says for thirty years: " I have to go there |
- 17
- | | |
|----|--|
| DF | ren, [^{22d} oder da kann ich hinfahren, [^{22e} und den Rest der Welt |
| | or, I can go there but I can't see the |
- 18
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | kann ich mir nich anschauen." [²⁴ Dann müssen Sie einfach |
| | rest of the world." Then you just have to |
| NT | [²³ Ja. |
| | Yeah. |
- 19
- | | |
|----|---|
| DF | sich mal in die Psyche eines Studenten versetzen. |
| | put yourself in the student's mind. |
| NT | [²⁵ Ja, Nee, das kann ich |
| | Yes. No, I can understand |

- 20
- >
 DF [26aDann sagt der sich: [26b"Wenn ich jetzt überall
 Then he says to himself: "If I can now go
 NT verstehen. Ja.
 that. Yes.
- 21
- DF hinfahren kann, [26cdann fahre ich jetzt nicht nach Yyyyyyyyyy.
 anywhere, then I won't go to Yyyyyyyyyy now.
- 22
- >
 DF [26d Da kann ich in zehn Jahren auch noch hinfahren."
 Because I can still go there in ten years time."
 NT [27Ja. [28Ja.
 Yes. Yes.
- 23
- >
 DF [26eaber ich will da jetzt nich hin." [29(1,5 Sek.) [30 Na. Hinzu
 but now, I don't want to go there." (1.5 sec.) No. In
- 24
- >
 DF kommt politische äh ((hhh)) Animositäten. [32aHinzu kommt,
 addition you have political eh animosities. Furthermore,
 NT [30 Ja.
 Yeah.
- 25
- DF [32bdass das/ dass das Russische uns als Fremdsprache/ [33Ich hab
 that the/ that Russian was a foreign language/ I had to
- 26
- DF es zwölf oder fünfzehn Jahre lernen müssen und hab da nie
 learn it for ten or twelve years, and never felt like do-
- 27
- >
 DF Lust dazu gehabt. [34a Hm ja, und so gibt es natürlich noch
 ing it. Hm. yeah. And there are definitely
- 28
- DF paar mehr Studenten, [34bdie das haben lernen müssen ohne
 other students who had to learn it without achieving
 NT / \
 [35Jaja
 Yeah

- 29
- DF [irgendeinen Effekt damit zu erzielen [^{34c}und die jetzt einfach
anything with it and who are
NT [yeah.
- 30
- DF [sagen [^{34d} "Ich will nicht." [^{34e} "Na es ist zu/ [^{34f}Ich muss
now saying: "I don't want to." Well, it is too/ "I DON'T
NT [[³⁶ Hm.
Hm.
- 31
- > [NICH mehr [^{34g}und ich will auch nicht mehr." [³⁸(1 Sek.) [^{39a}Das
DF [have to any more. and I don't want to any more." (1 sec.) One
/ \
> [[37 Jaja.
NT [Yeahyeah.
- 32
- > [!
DF [darf man also nicht ähm unberücksichtigt lassen
should not er forget that.
- 33
- DF [[⁴⁰(aus meiner Sicht).
(in my view).
NT [[⁴¹ Äh. Natürlich nicht. [^{42a} Nein, nein, nein [^{42b}aber ja im/
Er. Of course not. No, no, no, but yes, after
- 34
- > [(hh) [^{42c}(1 Sek.) [^{42d}immerhin sind Sie überzeugt, [^{42e}dass es wichtig
NT [hh (1 sec.) after all you are convinced that it is
- 35
- DF [[^{43a} Ja, erstens
Yes, first of
NT [ist ähh dann voor/ als Universität diesem ähm Partner-
important/ as a university er to hold on to this er partner
- 36
- > [weil/ weil wir denken, [^{43b}dass wir behilflich sein können mit
DF [all, because/ because we think that we could be of help
NT [schaft ähm festzuhalten.
ship.
- 37
- DF [den äh Lehrplänen. [^{44a}Das/ Davon bin ich überzeugt, [^{44b}dass
with er the curriculum. That/ I am convinced that
NT [[⁴⁵ Hm.
Mh.

- 38 DF [das was auf der Strecke der Sozialpädagogik gemacht
 [what has been done in the field of social pedagogy in
- 39 DF worden ist in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{44c}also im
 [the Federal German Republic. Well in
 NT [[⁴⁶ Ja.
 [Yeah.
- 40 DF Westen, [^{44d}Äh was jetzt auch hier bei uns gemacht wird,
 [the West. Er what has also been done now here with us,
- 41 DF [^{44d}das halt ich für sehr positiv. [^{48a}Vom vo grob/ [^{48b} Ich hab
 [I think it something very positive. Well, roughly/ I do
 NT [[⁴⁷ Hm.
 [Hm.
- 42 DF da nich viel Ahnung von, [^{48c}aber ich bin davon überzeugt, ^{48d}dass
 [not know much about it, but I am convinced that it is
 NT [[⁴⁹ Hm
 [Hm
- 43 > [! !
 DF [es in Ordnung ist. [^{50a}Und ich sage immer wieder: [^{50b} "Da wo
 [okay But I say over and over again: "If
- 44 DF wir nicht sind, [^{50c}als Bundesrepublik Deutschland, [^{50d}ist der
 [we are not present, as the Federal Republic of Germany, the
- 45 > [/\
 DF [Amerikaner". [^{50a}Ja, [^{52b}dann haben Sie halt das amerika-
 [Americans will be". Yeah, then you/they just have the American
 NT [[⁵¹ Und dann?
 [And then?
- 46 DF nische Modell. [⁵³Gut. [⁵⁴ Damit ist es dann halt nich
 [model. Well. So, it is then not
 NT [[⁵² Hahahahahahaha.
 [Hahahahahahah.

- 47
- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| > | DF | [1 das deutsche Modell 1].[⁵⁵ Wie Sie wollen. [^{57a} Na, also |
| | | [1 the German model 1] As you like. No, well |
| | | / \ / \ |
| > | NT | [⁵⁶ Jaja Jaja |
| | | Yeah Yeah |
- [1 laughing slightly
-
- 48
- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| > | DF | eigentlich muss die Bundesrepublik daran interessiert |
| | | actually Germany has to be interested in it, |
-
- 49
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | sein, [^{57b} eigentlich muss jede Ho/Hochschule daran interes- |
| | | actually every u/ university has to be interested |
-
- 50
- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| > | DF | ! siert sein, [^{57c} dass die Ausbildungsmodelle, [^{57d} die/ für die |
| | | in it, that the education models, which/ for which |
-
- 51
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | wir ja auch stehen [^{57e} und sagen [^{57f} „Die sind gut“, [^{57g} dass die |
| | | we stand for and say: "They are good". That they |
-
- 52
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | auch in andere Länder getragen werden. [^{59a} Ja. [^{59b} Oder wenn |
| | | are also taken to other countries. Yes. Or if you |
| | | / \ |
| > | NT | [⁵⁸ Jaja Ja. |
| | | Yeahyeah. Yes. |
-
- 53
- | | | |
|---|----|---|
| > | DF | Sie schon der Meinung sind, [^{59c} dass das so ist, [^{59d} warum soll |
| | | already are of the opinion that it is like that why |
-
- 54
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | man es dann nicht tun. [^{61a} Na, [^{61b} und Sie wissen [^{61c} „Immer wo |
| | | should one not do it then. No, and you know: "Wherever |
| > | NT | [⁶⁰ Jaja. |
| | | Yeahyeah. |
-
- 55
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | der eine nich ist, [^{61d} ist der . grad ein anderer." [⁶² Und wir haben |
| | | one person is not present the . other one will be." And we have |
-
- 56
- | | | |
|---|----|--|
| > | DF | ein Programm weniger und weniger Möglichkeit hier etwas zu machen. |
| | | one programm less and fewer possibilities to do something here. |

57 DF [63 Ich denke mir auch, [64 dass man ein paar mehr Aktivitäten innerhalb von
 [I think , that one could in any case organise some more

58 DF Deutschland sowieso machen wird, [65 weil es darum geht Studenten hierher
 [activities in Germany, since it is all about getting students

59 DF zu bekommen. [67 Daran sind wir interessiert,
 [here That is what we want
 NT [[66 Hmhm [68 Das ist natürlich auch sehr
 [hmhm That is of course also very

60 DF [69 Na [70 Daran wird die russische Seite interessiert sein und
 [And That will be of interest to the Russians as well and
 NT (nützlich) [71 Ja
 [useful Yes

61 DF [72 wir sind daran interessiert
 [we are interested in it